

Dear Friends of First Steps:

Indiana is one of ten states selected to be monitored this year by the US Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). OSEP has asked our state to conduct a self-assessment as part of their Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process. The Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process is designed to address both implementation and compliance issues with the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The self-assessment will examine special education services for children ages 3-21 (Part B) as well as First Steps Early Intervention Services (Part C) for children from birth up to age 3.

Indiana's Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) and the Indiana Department of Education have scheduled a series of seven (7) public meetings to obtain public comment about early intervention services and special education programs. All interested stakeholders, including families, service providers, LPCC members, LPCC coordinators, teachers, administrators, and others are encouraged to attend the public meetings. The meetings for special education and First Steps will be held at the same time, date and locations but in separate rooms, so participants will have an opportunity to attend each session and comment on both systems.

Participants will be invited to comment and share their experiences during discussion based upon a series of questions recommended by the Office of Special Education Programs. The Part C early intervention questions are:

1. Are there any barriers to the process of referring infants and toddlers to the Early Intervention (EI) system, or in obtaining evaluations?
2. Do all infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families receive all the services they need? Where do children receive their services? (community settings, day care, homes, libraries)
3. How are families included and supported in the process of development of the IFSP/in making decisions about their child's services?
4. What family support services are available in your community?
5. By the child's third birthday, does transition planning result in the timely provision of needed supports and services to a child and a child's family?
6. How is the State involved in assuring that appropriate services are provided to infants and toddlers with disabilities?

The Part B special education questions are:

1. Are students with disabilities receiving the special education and related services they need (promote a high quality education)?
2. To what extent do students with disabilities participate with non-disabled students? Do all students, regardless of placement, have access to the general curriculum?
3. Describe the planning process that takes place for students age 14 and older to ensure a successful transition to work, independent living, or additional education services (e.g. college, technical school). Are students receiving the services needed?
4. How are parents involved in the education of their children with disabilities?
5. How is the state involved in assuring that appropriate services are provided to students with disabilities?
6. By the child's 3rd birthday, does transition planning result in the timely provision of needed supports and services to a child and a child's family?

The public meeting schedule is attached. All meeting locations are accessible and ASL interpreters will be on site. If you need additional accommodations in order to attend these meetings, please

contact the First Steps Early Intervention System at 317-232-1144 or the Department of Education at 317-232-0577 no later than seven days prior to the meeting you plan to attend.

**PUBLIC MEETING SITES
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT MONITORING**

INDIANAPOLIS Monday, October 22, 2001 4:00- 7:00 pm local time
MSD Washington Township Schools Community Education Center
Conference Rooms B and C
8550 Woodfield Crossing Blvd. (SW of 86th and Keystone), Indianapolis

FT. WAYNE Tuesday, October 23, 2001 4:00- 7:00 pm local time
Anthis Career Center
Auditorium and Room 128
1200 South Barr Street, Ft. Wayne

EVANSVILLE Tuesday, October 23, 2001 4:00- 7:00 pm local time
Oak Hill Middle School
Cafeteria and Auditorium
7700 Oak Hill Road, Evansville
(go east at intersection of Highway 41 and 57...turn right at first light **after** airport entrance light...proceed approximately ½ mile...Oak Hill will be on the right)

MERRILLVILLE Wednesday, October 24, 2001 4:00- 7:00 pm local time
Merrillville High School
Arena and Cafeteria
276 East 68th Place, Merrillville

NEW ALBANY Wednesday, October 24, 2001 4:00- 7:00 pm local time
Mt. Tabor School
Library and Cafeteria
800 Mt. Tabor Road, New Albany

LAFAYETTE Thursday, October 25, 2001 4:00- 7:00 pm local time
Hiatt Administration Building
Board Room(s)
2300 Cason Street, Lafayette

MUNCIE Thursday, October 25, 2001 4:00- 7:00 pm local time
Anthony Administration Building
Board Rooms #2 and #4
2501 North Oakwood, Muncie

As always, we ask that you share this information with as many people as possible so that we have broad participation and representation at our public forums. Thank you for your continued interest in improving our early intervention and special education systems in Indiana.

Sincerely,
Denise Arland
ICC Chair